

FLOOD INFORMATION FOR CLARENCE RESIDENTS

FLOOD HAZARD, FLOOD SAFETY, FLOOD INSURANCE, PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES, PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND FLOOD WARNING INFORMATION

Your property may be located in or near a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) also referred to as the 100-year floodplain, floodzone or regulated floodplain. If your property is located in or near the SFHA your property may be subject to flooding. The Town of Clarence is providing this information to inform residents on flood hazards, flood safety, flood insurance, property protection measures and permitting requirements. If any resident has questions on this information or needs clarification of the information please contact the Clarence Engineering Department at (716) 741-8952.

The Clarence Flood Hazard

The flood hazard areas located in the Town of Clarence are caused primarily by high flow volumes from the Tonawanda, Black, Ransom and Gott Creek watersheds.

The most expansive floodplain in the Town of Clarence is caused by the Tonawanda Creek watershed. During moderate to severe flood events the Tonawanda Creek watershed overflows into the Black Creek watershed. The flows realized in the Tonawanda and Black Creek floodplains are not high velocity outside of the main channels and are generally slow rising and slow falling flood events. During a moderate to severe event a large portion of north Clarence will be inundated with slow moving flood waters which can cause varying levels of property damage.

The flood hazard areas associated with Ransom and Gott Creeks are of the more traditional riverine flood hazard with the majority of the flood hazard areas being in and adjacent to the creek corridors.

Clarence Flood Maps

The Clarence Flood Maps are available for viewing on the “Floodplain Administration and Flood Information” link on the Town of Clarence Engineering Department webpage.

Please be advised that the flood maps are for general information only. A specific determination of whether a property or structure lies within the floodplain can only be made based on elevation information. Contact the Clarence Engineering Department for specific information required to make such a determination.

Letters of Map Change (Letters of Map Amendment (LOMA) or Map Revision (LOMR))

A structure on your property may be outside the floodplain in certain instances if constructed at the proper elevation and it is in compliance with the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance of the Town of Clarence. If FEMA issues approval for and grants a LOMA or LOMR for a specific structure or property the mandatory flood insurance requirement may be removed. Contact the Clarence Engineering Department for more information on applying for and obtaining a LOMA

or LOMR. Flood insurance can still be purchased for structures or properties removed from the floodplain by LOMA or LOMR at the discretion of the owner or lending institution.

The Clarence Engineering Department offers assistance with the LOMA and LOMR process and can be contacted for information on the technical requirements for application.

Flood Insurance

The Town of Clarence is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP allows property owners of all properties located within or outside of floodplains to obtain federal flood insurance to cover any losses due to floods that are not covered under traditional homeowners insurance policies. The purchase of flood insurance is highly recommend if you own property in or near a flood hazard area. Insurance rates are established by the federal government and are further based on specific elevations and flood risk.

Flood Safety

When a flood does occur please note the following for the ultimate safety of you and your family:

Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Use a pole or stick to make sure that the ground is still there before you go through an area where there is standing water.

Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. Electrocution is the number two killer in floods. Electrical currents can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your utility company and local emergency dispatch (911)

Have your electricity turned off by the Power Company. Some appliances such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

Watch for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to seek, poke, and turn items over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step. After a food, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames until you know for sure that the gas has been turned off and the area has been properly ventilated.

Carbon monoxide exhaust kills. Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machine outdoors. The same goes for camping stoves. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly; only cook with charcoal outdoors. **You are required by code to have a working carbon monoxide detector installed in your home.**

Clean everything that got wet. Floodwaters pick up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories, and storage buildings. Spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicines are health hazards. **When in doubt, throw them out.**

Take good care of yourself. Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is tough on both the body and the spirit. And the effects a disaster has on you and your family may last a long time.

Property Protection Measures

If you own property in or near a flood hazard area it is highly recommended that you consider taking measures to protect your personal property in the event of a flood. ***Flooding will occur in and/or near flood hazard areas at some point in time. You can never be too prepared.***

There are FEMA publications available to provide guidance on protecting yourself and your personal property before, during and after a flood occurs.

We have made some of these FEMA documents available on the Town of Clarence Engineering Department webpage under “Floodplain Administration and Flood Information”

- Flood Preparation and Safety
- Retrofitting Flood Prone Structures
- Repairing Your Flooded Home

Measures that can be taken to protect your flood prone structure and/or property may include:

1. Elevating the building, if practical, so that flood waters do not enter or reach a level that causes damage.
2. Constructing floodproofed barriers out of impervious fill material or concrete between the structure and the flood waters.
3. Closing or sealing exterior wall openings, such as basement windows, which are located below the 100-year flood elevation.
4. Reinforcing exterior walls, especially below the 100-year flood elevation, to withstand the hydrostatic pressure from flood waters.
5. Relocating contents to above the basement and/or above the 100-year flood elevation.
6. Installing shutoff valves on sewer lines located below the 100-year flood elevation.
7. Eliminating basement floor drains.
8. Elevating electrical panels, furnaces, water heaters, washers and dryers, etc. to above the 100-year flood elevation.

When pursuing any property protection measure be sure to contract with a reputable contractor experienced in this specialized work. Be sure to check a contractors references, obtain clear written estimates, and require proof of insurance, written contract and guarantees in writing.

Most property protection measures projects require permitting by the Town of Clarence. Before authorizing any contractor to proceed with work on your property please contact the Building Department and/or the Engineering Department. The Engineering Department can meet with you at the property to discuss your project and provide you with an advisory opinion on the proposed work. The Engineering Department can be contacted at 716-741-8952, Monday through Friday, 7AM to 3:30PM.

Permit Requirements

Modifications to structures (including foundations), plumbing and electrical modifications require Permits from the Clarence Building Department. Please contact the Building Department with details of your specific project and staff can guide you through the permit process.

A Floodplain Development Permit is required for any proposed filling and/or grading work within a 100-year floodplain area. Please contact the Engineering Department with details of your project and staff can guide you through the permit process.

Larger developments within the 100-year floodplain required a detailed technical review by the Engineering Department. Contact the Engineering Department early on in the planning process to discuss your project relative to floodplain management and compliance with the Town of Clarence Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

Drainage Conveyance System Maintenance

Unobstructed stormwater flow is essential to minimizing impacts and damage due to flooding. We can all help in maintaining free flow conveyance by not dumping soil, grass, landscape debris, etc. in our established ditches, drains, creeks and channels.

Flood Warning Information

There are several ways residents can obtain information on a specific flooding threat to the Town as follows:

1. Residents are encouraged to monitor the local television and radio stations, especially WBEN and WGR.
2. The National Weather Service in Buffalo can be accessed via the internet to obtain up to the minute weather statements and warnings.
3. The Tonawanda Creek at Rapids Flood Gauge can be accessed via the internet.
4. Sign up for weather notifications at NY Alert.

NOTE: Web links for 2, 3 and 4 above are available at the Clarence Engineering Department web page under “Floodplain Administration and Flood Information”.

The Engineering Department and Building Department are here to assist you if you have questions pertaining to the information presented in this document. Further questions or information on the flood risk in the Town of Clarence can be provided by contacting the Engineering Department.

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